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Subject: Interview with author, Jeffrey St. John on the downing of KAL 007.

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RADIO TV REPORTS, INC.

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FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM News STATION WTOP Radio

DATE August 25, 1984 8:50 A.M. CITY Washington, D.C.

SUBJECT Soviet Manipulation of International Events

NEWSMAN: Question: Are the Soviets trying to manipulate international events to influence the presidential election? Russ Franzen, in this special report, may have some answers.

RUSS FRANZEN: On September 1st, 1983, Korean Air Lines Flight 007 strayed off course and was shot down in Soviet airspace. The predawn attack left 269 people dead, including United States Congressman Lawrence McDonald. President Reagan called the attack a crime against humanity that must not be forgotten.

A journalist and friend of the late Congressman McDonald, Jeffrey St. John, looked into the events surrounding the doomed flight. His conclusions show the Soviet Union having many motivations for the attack. One is especially interesting.

JEFFREY ST. JOHN: In May of 1960, when an American U-2 high-flying air reconnaissance was shot down over the Soviet Union, when it was taking air reconnaissance photographs, it was piloted by Gary Powers, that incident eventually disrupted the summit meeting that was scheduled between Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet Premier, and President Dwight Eisenhower. That was in May of 1960. In July of 1960 the Soviets, over the Barents Straits or the Kola Peninsular, which is basically in the northern part of Russia, the northern polar region, the Soviets shot down an RB-47 air reconnaissance aircraft of the United States with eight crewmen aboard. Four died in the crash and four were eventually taken prisoner.

Now, the significance of those two air incidents some 60 days apart, or actually -- yeah, about 60 days apart -- was that

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we later were able to discover from testimony of a high-ranking Soviet colonel by the name of Colonel Oleg Penkovsky -- his diaries smuggled to the West contend that Nikita Khrushchev deliberately provoked the U-2 incident and the RB-47 incident as a way of manipulating the 1960 elections between Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts and former Vice President Richard Nixon.

FRANZEN: So, what's the connection between the two incidents?

ST. JOHN: I believe that the September 1st, 1983 destruction of 007 followed very, very closely that same motivation, although the incidents are separated by 24 years. And I say that by reason of the fact that ever since September 1st, the Soviets have engaged in one of the most unprecedented propaganda campaigns of vilification and hatred against President Reagan. I cannot recall a parallel in my 25 years of reporting national and international affairs. Extraordinary.

FRANZEN: Jeffrey St. John says because the President became famous for his tough Cold War rhetoric, the Soviets took a chance in shooting down Flight 007.

ST. JOHN: The Soviets, I think, decided to test the Administration to see exactly how far they could go. And they failed the test.

FRANZEN: St. John says the Administration reacted the way it did for two reasons.

ST. JOHN: One was cold-blooded politics, because of the elections. And I think Mr. Reagan and his advisers concluded that there was no political percentage in getting tough with the Soviets, because that would play to the public relations caricature painted by the Democrats that somehow Mr. Reagan was a trigger-happy cowboy or a nuclear Napoleon who would blunder us into war. And I think the second motivation, which I think clearly was vitiated by events over the last year, was that the nuclear arms reduction talks were so important, that somehow we have to acknowledge that the 007 destruction was a horrible, heinous crime, but that the nuclear arms reduction talks were far more important because it involved the destiny of the planet.

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